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LETTERS FROM OUR SOLDIERS.

Col. Funston, Lewis Coffield, Earl Chastain
Lovelie Shaffer and Fred Nelson Tell
the Battle Story of the Far East.

From Colonel Funston.
Col. Funston, in a letter to the editor of the REGISTER, writes with his usual modesty concerning the doings of himself and his regiment. "You have probably read in the papers ere this," he says, "more or less details of the fighting as well as the causes that brought on the conflict. The Philippines were simply aching for a spanking and now they are getting it hard. The Twentieth has made several advances, but now is entrenched at Caloccan, three miles north of the city, where we have had some desultory fighting. We are now waiting the arrival of reinforcements enroute from home, and when they come the enemy will probably be given another touch of high life. As it is now all the troops here, except several regiments used to preserve order in the city, are formed as a cordon around the land side of Manila.

"It is an undoubted fact that of all the regiments here the most praise has been given the Twentieth Kansas, and it is the most talked of regiment in the Eighth Army Corps. There has been a dash and vim about the fighting of the regiment that has called forth most liberal praise from our generals.

"More fighting is certain and additional losses are inevitable, but I do hope that it will not be necessary to get any more than possible of these Kansas boys killed or maimed. While I want the regiment to do its duty wherever sent, I do not want either it or me to win glory at the expense of valuable lives."

Farther on the Colonel tells of a savage letter he has had from some woman in Kansas accusing him of starving her boy! "What would the old soldiers of the civil war think of the rations that are served to these boys here?" he says. "Fresh beef, brought in refrigerator ships, potatoes, canned vegetables, light bread, coffee and all of all these things they want. Since the outbreak six weeks ago I have not tasted a mouthful of food except the rations of a private soldier, and I have enjoyed it and not cared for any thing else."

In another place he speaks of a roasting somebody gave him for not allowing the men to bathe on board the transport, and for compelling them to wear their blouses at religious service, and says in reply that no restrictions whatever were placed on their bathing, and that the men were allowed to go about the ship in their underwear if they wished.

From which it appears that even the Colonel of a victorious regiment has some troubles.

March, 8th 1899.

Dear Folks at home.—

This is my 22nd birthday and I just happened to think of it a few minutes ago. I suppose you are wondering at this very minute where I am celebrating, so I will tell you all about it.

I am sitting in my private office, a hole in the ground, with a shelter tent fly over it for a shade) perspiring fighting flies and big red ants, trying to think of something to write. This is the thirty second day we have laid in the trenches and I am sun-burned, dirty as a pig, unshaven and unshorn, but with the exception of a slight touch of rheumatism never felt better in all these twenty-two years. I find that my beard is a beautiful red and I shall certainly get rid of them and never try the experiment again, the first opportunity I have to do so. Bert Miller is my bunkie and owns one-third interest in the dug-out with Sam Bell, of Pittsburg, Kans., and myself. Miller has almost as much of a beard as his father and looks for the world like him. The boys are all well and were it not for the Philippine sharpshooters this outing would be better than staying in barracks in the filthy old town. Their sharpshooters can't hit a barn when they do shoot. They just come close enough to scare a fellow and make him break his neck getting back into the trenches, when he ventures out and is shot at. The insurgents on our front are entrenched at the crest of the hill and in the edge of the woods, while our trenches are in the ravine at the foot of the hill; we are about seven hundred yards apart. They put up a flag of truce three or four days ago and the Colonel went out to meet it and talked with their officers, since then we have had a sort of an armistice on and not a shot has been fired on our line, although the Montana regiment next in line on our right is under fire continually. The agreement suits us very well for we can lounge around under shade trees and get some exercise.

We are waiting here for the right wing of the army to swing around

even with us and then we will take the city of Malabon across the river on our left. The "fighting Twentieth Kansas" has its position on the extreme left of the line, and has advanced this far in battle promotion along the Bay shore, through rice fields, scrubby timber and swamps. Dewey has kept the "Monadnock" and "Charleston" along the coast even with our line and when ever we have run into a thick bunch of the niggers one of these gun-boats would throw a few shells over among them and help us out. It must be a grand sight to witness (from a safe place) the land and naval forces working together, but it gets most too interesting on the firing line at times. The right wing of our Division advanced some distance yesterday and had to fight it step at a time, but lost very few men, while they simply slaughtered the insurgents. As soon as they come up on a line with Kansas and Montana's regiments we will mix up with the heathens again and go for Malabon. They will probably hate to give up their entrenchments to us for they are too lazy to dig more, but I guess we will take them all O. K. we haven't run up against anything yet we could not take.

The Colonel is a scrapper and I don't believe he is afraid of the Devil. The 20th U. S. Infantry came in over a week ago and I have seen several of boys I knew in Kansas. I met Fred Casimire the other day and had quite a talk with him, he is a Corporal in Co. "A" of the 20th U. S. Inf. Roy Featheringill came in from Frisco on the Steamer Morgan City and paid us a visit out here. He is a fine fellow, and having left God's country only a month ago was considered quite a curiosity and a very welcome visitor by us all. He did not remember me of course as I was a small kid when he left home, but says he is well acquainted with papa.

We got our mail the other day here in the trenches and may be you think we didn't scramble for it. I rec'd your letter and the Topeka papers all O. K. Hope papa will take care of himself and not get the pneumonia, it worries me like sixty to hear that any of you are sick. Tell Fred I would write to him in answer to his letter received some time ago, but haven't any more paper, I borrowed this.

Well I haven't anything to write about after all so had better close and prepare for "show show" (dinner). Now don't worry about me for I will make it all right, and I hate to think you are always thinking I am either sick or in danger or something of that kind when there is absolutely no use of it. Don't borrow trouble, and one year from today I'll celebrate my 23rd birthday with my feet under Dad's table. With love to all, I am

L. E. COFFIELD.

Co. I 20th Kans., U. S. V., Manila, P. I.

Caloccan, P. I., Feb. 26, 1899.

Dear Mother:

I will try and write you a short note under difficulties, as we are under almost constant fire from the insurgents. We have chased them this far, but will now have to wait for reinforcements before we can drive them farther, as our line is stretched as much as it will stand and they are in front of us with a much superior force. We are just about a mile and a half from Malabon, which is a well fortified town of about twenty thousand, but we can take it at any time as it is at the mercy of Dewey's fleet and our artillery. We have, up to date, lost about forty killed and wounded in the regiment.

Col. Fred is known to all the troops as a very brave colonel, who commands a regiment of terrific fighters.

Win. McGrew, from Iola, was shot through the shoulder, but will get well.

The insurgents are great night-fighters. They charge our lines almost every night but are repulsed with great loss. They are brave enough, but fire too high to do much damage. The Twentieth regiment and Fourth U. S. A. are in, and those from New York are reported from Singapore. When they all arrive we are going to run the natives clear to the mountains.

They got into our lines on the night of the 23rd and tried to capture Manila. They burned block after block, but the Americans just let the fire burn and went to fighting. We killed about five hundred and they were glad to quit.

We have been in these same trenches twenty-three days and expect to stay here about ten more. All

the boys are getting to be experts in finding their places in the trenches.

The climate is much better than in Manila, as we get better air and are not crowded so much as in the city. The health of the Iola boys is good, even S. C. Brewster looks well.

Major Metcalf was shot through the ear by a Mauser bullet. I don't know when this letter will leave but will send it in to Manila today.

Yours, J. E. CHASTAIN.

Lovelie Shaffer, son of Mr. and Mrs. N. Shaffer of Iola, writing to them under date of Feb. 27, 1899, gives the following account of the advance and capture of Caloccan. The letter is written from that captured burg.

"We made an advance of at least two miles driving the enemy before us when we got mixed up with Shrapnel from Dewey's fleet. In fact we were about one thousand yards in advance of where we should have been when we received orders to fall back, which the Colonel did with many regrets. We fell back about half a mile where we stayed all night, at all times under the enemy's fire. Monday morning we advanced beyond the rebels' entrenchments across the river, where we took up our position and threw up entrenchments. We kept up this position under a desultory fire from the rebels until Tuesday afternoon when Companies I, B, C and part of E made a charge and drove the rebels back, after which we were bothered no more for a day or so. Friday is our day for most everything and seemed the best day for us again, as that day a general advance of the division was ordered to capture Caloccan, one of the best strongholds that the enemy held. The battle commenced with three shots from one of Dewey's fleets and was followed by the artillery, and finally by the infantry. They may say all they please about the charge at San Juan hill but I think I may rightfully say that it did not surpass our charge on Caloccan.

The Kansas regiment held the extreme left supported by a battery of the Utah artillery. Montana was on our right with the Third Artillery (armed with Krag-Jorgensen rifles) on their right and the Pennsylvania on the extreme right. Our firing line was in the neighborhood of four miles long. Our entire firing line at present date is about thirty miles long. When we started on our advance we just went along as though there was nothing to stop us, except at one time when we advanced over the crest of a hill where the bullets were falling like hail. Only for an instant did we pause to gather strength for the final charge. We drove the rebels before us just like sheep. We went through the town which was burned by our supporting line. It was a grand sight. One which I shall not forget for some time. And it was a pretty sight, but alas, too, it was a deadly one. It was something to gaze at when we got on the top of the hill and could see most of the entire firing line.

We advanced about one and one-half miles beyond the city when we quit on account of darkness. We slept that night behind some rice field dykes and moved back about one-half mile the next morning which position we now occupy, for how long we know not. Different reasons are going as to why we remain here. We think the real cause is to wait for reinforcements which are said to arrive soon. Our own regimental details under charge of Lieut. Hull, have buried over three hundred.

We are living good, have plenty to eat and a cover over our trenches. We have lost out of our regiment up to date five killed and twenty-five wounded. We expect some more hard fighting as the rebels are said to be strongly entrenched in front of us about a mile and a half. We look for, and will probably have two more battles, one where the rebels are now entrenched and at Malolos. We have as a regiment, been highly complimented by the higher officers for our fighting qualities and for our good discipline.

After we had captured the town and made our stop for the night our company was formed in company front to get positions. Colonel Funston was sitting on his pony just behind the company when Major General MacArthur rode up and said to the Colonel, "Hurrah for Kansas, by—" Our Colonel is a fighter and a leader of the first water and anywhere he goes so will his regiment. All our officers as far as I can observe are cool and brave. Our Captain, in battle especially, is a very cool-headed man. And Major Metcalf, say! he walks up and down the line as cool as a watermelon just out of the ice chest and seems to have no thought of the hail of bullets around and about him.

One word concerning the enlisted men. The rank and file is composed mostly of men that would follow their

officers into hell if it was necessary, and thought they would find any rebels there by doing so. Of course there are some woolen socks needed for men with cold feet. As for myself, you know I always was a coward and possibly will be all my life, and the way I dodge Mauser bullets is a caution. The fact is I dodge Mauser bullets worse than a tax-dodger dodges taxes. But I think I will still be in this war and when I have to fight will fight to "who dropped the poodle-dog." There is one thing that I am glad of and that is the regiment can no more be called tin soldiers but is now called the "Fighting Kansas." We will no more have to listen to the stories of the battle of Manila by troops that took part in that affair, for the battle of Caloccan lays the battle of Manila clear in the shade. I hope you are all well as this leaves me. Best regards to all friends.

Yours till we meet again.
THEO. L. SHAFFER.

In a letter dated February 26, at Caloccan, Fred Nelson gives the following sketches of the situation of the troops at that time and of the burning of Manila by the insurgents and later by the Americans in self protection. He writes:

"We have been in the field since three weeks ago last night and fighting almost every day. Our regiment has eight killed and about forty wounded. I think no Iola boy except McGrew who is not seriously hurt. A bullet went through his shoulder. After we took and burned Caloccan Feb. 10, we had to stop all advance along the line to wait for reinforcements as our entire line is over thirty-two miles long. Our regiment is about the farthest from Manila as near as I can tell and occupies the extreme left of the line next to the bay and about a half mile from where Caloccan stood and a mile from Malabon. (Here is a map sketched in by the writer.)

"That is the way it appears to me. They, the insurgents, have large forces all around outside of our lines and Malabon is a strong hold. On the right and left in front of our regiment you see I have placed insurgent cannon. Here is the only place our line has been bombarded by them except for a while the very first night. The insurgent cannon on our left was fired at us a few times about a week ago but our battery soon located it and silenced it. On the morning of the 23rd they had slipped in among the dykes on our left and gave us a raking cross fire which killed three men and wounded seven or eight. The same morning early they began on us with the cannon on the right, firing at the Utah battery and 6th artillery. Their shots fell about 100 yards short of the battery and then bounced and passed us. The 20th Kansas lines are on both sides of the artillery, one company being on the right. Myself and another fellow had climbed up on a high wall about thirty feet high, which is back of the church and seems to have been an intended addition to the church) at the first shot. From there we watched a couple when one bounced and ricocheted over in our direction and so close that we nearly fell off the wall. (Guess the wind of the shell nearly blew me off?) All that day and night and the next day and night they fired at us all the time and Mausers were snapping and Remingtons whizzing all day. (Mausers and Remingtons are the two kinds of rifles the insurgents have.)

"The night before the hardest attack was made out here the natives in Manila rose. Altogether there were only about two regiments of us there. The insurgents set fire in several places in the city and then bugle calls sounded in the streets and companies formed in no time who fought our boys all night there in the city. When the fire companies tried to fight the fire they would cut the hose right in plain sight and several were shot and one who tried it too near a soldier had his back broken by a clubbed musket. There were hundreds of them killed and women and children burned to death. The total will probably reach almost a thousand. Some soldiers were killed and wounded but I don't know how many. The insurgents, about 150 of them, attacked the engine house of the railroad we have been running. There were only ten soldiers there and they soon had to retreat back this way. One of them, Webber, of Company I, had the ends of the third and fourth fingers of his right hand shot off and six cartridges cut in two in his belt. He came back here to report, and reinforcements were sent and help came from town as it was about 6:30 a. m. and things were more quiet there and the car house was re-captured, about a dozen of them were killed and the rest escaped. During the fight at night orders were given to fire the lower part of the city where the insurgents

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live and thousands of their houses were burned. All the next day the fires raged in Manila and over the space we fought the first Sunday out. So we took them at their own game and raised them, but it was a terrible punishment. But I believe it was the only way to rid the city of some of the most unsafe places. They are friends in day time and shoot at you at night. But I was awful, women and children dead or homeless, huddled in bunches. Ten thousand Manila Filipinos asked for protection. They were put in cases and towed out and anchored in the bay. I wish I could write you a long letter and tell you all about the last three weeks, but I have neither the time nor facilities.

"Oh, yes, the morning of the fire and the hardest attack here, a sharp-shooter was captured about 200 yards back of the church behind our lines. He said he was sent back by his colonel to pick off officers.

"I see Sam Barton every day. The band has been working pretty hard since we came to the field, carrying wounded, guarding ammunition, cleaning quarters, repairing the railroad, etc.

"Mother asked me what 'chew the rag' means. It means to complain, cuss, kick, grind, 'beef,' etc. There is a crowd in every company who indulge in it most of the time about every thing that comes up or has to be done.

"The reinforcements are now arriving and we will soon advance again. I hope we may soon get these natives licked and come home but they are not cowards and don't seem the least bit discouraged. Some of them stayed in their trenches during our last advance and were bayoneted by the boys. Well good bye for this time. Give my best regards to all friends and relatives." FRED.

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To Whom It May Concern: Notice is hereby given that the partnership between C. L. Knowlton and D. D. Spicer, doing business under the firm name of Knowlton & Spicer, in this day dissolved by mutual consent, C. L. Knowlton assuming all liabilities and will collect all notes or accounts.

Dated this 28 day of March, 1899.
C. L. KNOWLTON.
D. D. SPICER.

EWING & SAVAGE.

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